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St. Croix Bar Owner Faces Felony Assault Charges for Deliberately Hitting Pedestrian with Truck

Melendez, co-owner of the Oasis Bar & Restaurant in St. Croix, faces felony assault charges for allegedly hitting a pedestrian with his truck in dispute over a faulty vehicle and unpaid bar tab. Witnesses and video footage corroborate incident

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Mugshot of Samuel Melendez. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — A man is facing felony assault charges after reportedly deliberately “knocking down” a pedestrian on Queen Street.?

According to court documents, police were called in on Sunday evening shortly after the incident occurred. They spoke with two witnesses who told them that they saw a brown-colored truck

attempt to hit a man that was walking down the road.

The truck missed the first time, and so the driver reportedly reversed into the pedestrian, striking him, and then drove off. The two eye witnesses directed police towards a third witness, who they said was speaking to the driver of the truck before he got behind the wheel. The driver was identified as Samuel Melendez, co-owner of the Oasis Bar and Restaurant on King Street.

When police spoke to the injured pedestrian, he told them that the incident stems from a dispute over a faulty vehicle he bought last year from Melendez. Last November, he said he had gone to the bar owner to ask for a refund, and was denied. In retaliation, the man said he neglected to pay his bar tab after consuming a few beers.

Last week, the man said he was near the Frederiksted vegetable market when Melendez approached him and slapped him over the unpaid bar tab. He told police that the most recent incident was a continuation of the dispute over the “lemon” vehicle he was sold.

A fourth witness told police that Melendez drunkenly confessed to running over the pedestrian following the incident.

Police were able to review footage of both the slapping incident and Sunday’s collision, which corroborated the narrative from the witnesses.

Melendez was ultimately arrested, with police recommending charges of attempted murder and third-degree assault. He appeared before Magistrate Yolan Brow Ross on Monday, with only the assault charge to answer for, according to court documents.

Magistrate Brow Ross found probable cause to uphold the charge against him, but because Melendez had refused to cooperate with the booking process, the hearing was continued until Tuesday, when the question of bail will be heard.